

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 8189

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YU, AU
SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE

REF: VIENNA 7128

1. SUMMARY. CONFRONTATION SEEMS TO BE MOOD AMONG MAJOR INTERESTED GROUPS ON SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE AS GOA GOES FORWARD WITH PREPARATIONS FOR COUNTRY-WIDE LANGUAGE CENSUS ON NOVEMBER 14. GOVERNMENT WILL LAUNCH INFORMATION CAMPAIGN BEGINNING MID-OCTOBER TO CONVINCE PUBLIC OF NEED AND PURPOSE OF CENSUS. GOA IS ALSO PREPARED TO COUNTER VIGOROUSLY ANY CHARGES YUGOSLAVIA MAY LEVEL AGAINST AUSTRIA IN INTERNATIONAL FORA ON LEGALITY OF ACTION UNDER 1955 STATE TREATY. STRATEGY OF SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERSHIP IS TO RENDER LANGUAGE HEAD-COUNT USELESS AND THEREBY MOVE GOA TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH MINORITY LEADERS ACROSS NEGOTIATING TABLE. THIS POSSIBILITY IS CAUSE FOR SOME CONCERN IN GOA FOR REASONS OF PRESTIGE AND DOMESTIC POLITICS. OF MORE IMMEDIATE
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AND GREATER CONCERN FOR GOA, HOWEVER, IS INCREASED

POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE--BOMBINGS AND ASSASSINATION--
AS POLITICAL PASSIONS IN CARINTHIA BECOME AROUSED WITH
APPROACH OF NOVEMBER 14 DATE. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRIAN FEDERAL SENCE: CHANCELLOR KREISKY FAILED
AGAIN IN MEETING WITH SLOVENIAN MINORITY LEADERS ON
SEPTEMBER 29 TO SECURE THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF LANGUAGE
CENSUS AND NEW MINORITIES LAW AS FRAMEWORK FOR IMPE-
MENTATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS GUARANTEED UNDER ARTICLE 7
OF STATE TREATY OF 1955. MEANWHILE, GOA IS MOVING AHEAD
WITH PREPARATIONS FOR HOLDING COUNTRY-WIDE LANGUAGE
CENSUS ON NOVEMBER 14 IN ACCORDANCE WITH LEGISLATION
ADOPTED JULY 7. GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED INFORMATION
PROGRAM, CONSISTING OF MEDIA ADS, POSTAL MAILINGS AND
BROCHURES TO EXPLAIN PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE OF LANGUAGE
HEAD-COUNT, IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ABOUT MID-OCTOBER.
EFFORT BY TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT TO MOUNT
SEPARATE, THREE-PARTY EDUCATION PROGRAM AMONG RANK AND
FILE OF PARTIES FLOUNDERED ON UNWILLINGNESS OF SOCIALIST
PARTY (SPO) TO JOIN UNDERTAKING. SPO RELUCTANCE REFLECTS
DISCORD WITHIN SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP OUTSIDE OF CARINTHIA
WITH GOA'S HANDLING OF ISSUE AND DESIRE TO MAINTAIN
SOME INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION FROM OTHER TWO PARTIES
WHICH, IN CASE OF CARINTHIAN SCENE, ARE CONSIDERED TO
BE MUCH MORE EXTREME ON MINORITY ISSUE. CHANCELLOR
HIMSELF CONTINUES TO STRESS THAT SCENARIO NOW IN TRAIN
FOR LANGUAGE CENSUS REPRESENTS MOST REASONABLE AND
EFFECTIVE WAY OF RESOLVING ISSUE AND IS ATTEMPTING, BY
PUBLIC STATEMENTS, TO EXERCISE MODERATING INFLUENCE ON
AROUSED POLITICAL TEMPERS IN CARINTHIA.

3. CARINTHIAN POLITICAL SCENE: LEADERSHIP IN CARINTHIA
OF THREE POLITICAL PARTIES IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT IS
ATTEMPTING, EACH IN ITS OWN WAY, TO EXPLOIT UPCOMING
CENSUS FOR LOCAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. STRIDENCY OF
PARTIES' PRESS COMMENTARY ON ISSUE IS ON INCREASE AS
PARTIES VIE WITH ONE ANOTHER IN THEIR CLAIMS OF "PUTTING
DOWN" MINORITY. RESULT IS GROWTH OF CONFRONTATIONAL MOOD
AND POLITICAL CLIMATE OF ETHNIC INTOLERANCE. BY PRODUCT
THEREOF IS PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICE AT POLITICAL
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EVENTS OR PROTEST RALLIES TO STIFLE AT INCEPTION ANY
ATTEMPTED VIOLENCE.

4. SLOVENIAN MINORITY LEADERSHIP: APPROACH OF LEADER-
SHIP OF SLOVENIAN MINORITY GROUPS REMAINS ESSENTIALLY
UNCHANGED, NAMELY THAT SINCE LANGUAGE CENSUS BILL WAS
ADOPTED WITHOUT MINORITY INPUT IN FINAL STAGES OF BILL'S
PREPARATION, AUSTRO-SLOVENES AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS SHOULD

BOYCOTT CENSUS BY NON-PARTICIPATION OR BY INVALIDATING BALLOT. IN SUPPORT OF THIS APPROACH, MINORITY LEADERSHIP IS SCHEDULING NUMBER OF PROTEST RALLIES BEFORE CENSUS DAY AND IS IN TOUCH WITH MINORITY GROUPS IN OTHER PARTS OF WESTERN EUROPE IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN THEIR SUPPORT ON ISSUE. BASIC OBJECTIVE OF THIS APPROACH IS TO RENDER RESULTS OF LANGUAGE HEAD-COUNT UNUSEABLE AND THEREBY FORCE GOA TO ENTER ROUND OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SLOVENE MINORITY LEADERS IN EARLY 1977 BEFORE OTHER HALF OF PACKAGE - "PROMOTION OF MINORITIES" BILL - TAKES EFFECT.

5. CROATIAN MINORITY IN BURGENLAND: CONTROVERSY OVER SLOVENE MINORITY IN CARINTHIA HAS SENSITIZED SOME ELEMENTS IN CROATIAN MINORITY IN BURGENLAND (HERETOFORE LARGELY PLACID AND ON WAY TO ASSIMILATION) ON QUESTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC HERITAGE. IN CONTRAST TO CARINTHIA, ISSUE IN BURGENLAND IS DEVOID OF ETHNIC INTOLERANCE AND OF STRUGGLE OVER NATIONALIST SYMBOLS SUCH AS BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. IN BURGENLAND, CROATIAN MINORITY IS ITSELF DIVIDED IN ITS POLITICAL ALLEGIANCES, WITH SOCIALIST GROUP SUPPORTING MODERATE, ASSIMILATIONIST APPROACH AND CONSERVATIVE GROUP FAVORING MORE ACTIVE PUBLIC POLICY OF MAINTENANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY (LANGUAGE, SCHOOLS, MEDIA). OUTCOME OF NOV. 14 CENSUS MAY PROVIDE SOME INDICATION OF STRENGTH OF RESPECTIVE APPEALS.

6. GOA APPROACH ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE: GOA HAS SET

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENNA 8189

FORTH IN RECENT WEEKS ITS VIEWS TO ITS EE NEIGHBORS (BULGARIA, HUNGARY, POLAND, ROMANIA) ON ITS POLICY TOWARD MINORITIES IN AUSTRIA AND PARTICULARLY ON RATIONALE FOR NOVEMBER 14 LANGUAGE CENSUS. GOA FEELS IT HAS STRONG LEGAL CASE FOR LANGUAGE CENSUS AND HAS ASSEMBLED AND DISTRIBUTED DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF THIS APPROACH. IT HAS ALSO CONDUCTED VERY INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WITH EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUR FORMER OCCUPYING POWERS OF AUSTRIA AND CONCLUDED THAT THESE POWERS HAVE NO INTEREST IN BECOMING INVOLVED IN ISSUE THROUGH POSSIBLE ACTION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INTERNATIONALIZE ISSUE, E.G., BY TRYING TO INVOLVE ARTICLE 35 OF 1955 STATE TREATY. AUSTRIAN MFA ANTICIPATES YUGOSLAVIA RAISING SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE IN SOME INTERNATIONAL FORA THIS FALL (UNGA, UNESCO) AND FONMIN-DESIGNATE PAHR, WHOSE APPOINTMENT BY CHANCELLOR TO POSITION IS RELATED IN PART TO PAHR'S PRIOR HANDLING OF ISSUE ON DOMESTIC SCENE, IS EXPECTED TO MOUNT VIGOROUS COUNTER CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANY YUGOSLAV ATTACKS ON CENSUS.

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7. OUTLOOK: ALL PARTIES TO ISSUE SEEM COMMITTED TO CONFRONTATIONAL COURSE AND, HAVING LAID REPUTATIONS AND PRESTIGE ON LINE, THEY WILL GO THEIR RESPECTIVE WAYS IN FAVOR OF, OR IN OPPOSITION TO, NOVEMBER 14 LANGUAGE CENSUS. AT MOMENT BIG UNCERTAINTY IS ULTIMATE UTILITY OF CENSUS. EFFECTIVE BOYCOTT BY SLOVENE MINORITY AND WIDESPREAD DISINTEREST IN CENSUS OUTSIDE CARINTHIA COULD MAKE CENSUS RESULTS MEANINGLESS AS YARDSTICK FOR DETERMINING SIZE AND LOCATION OF MINORITIES AND LATER ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. THIS IS CURRENT EXPECTATION OF SLOVENE LEADERSHIP AND CAUSE FOR SOME CONCERN BY GOA, WHICH IS PUTTING UP EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT US 43 MILLION DOLLARS TO CARRY OUT LANGUAGE HEAD-COUNT. IN WAKE OF INCONCLUSIVE OUTCOME, SLOVENIAN MINORITY LEADERS WOULD THEN EXPECT ISSUE TO BE TOSSED BACK TO CHANCELLOR WITH LIKLIHOOD OF NEW ROUND OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SLOVENE MINORITY. ALL SIDES TO ISSUE ARE TAKING TOUGH PUBLIC STANCE NOW BUT NEITHER GOA NOR MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES HAVE RULED OUT POSSIBILITY OF LATER EFFORT AT NEGOTIATING TABLE.

GREATER BUT PUBLICLY INARTICULATED CONCERN OF GOA AT
MOMENT, HOWEVER, IS THAT RADICALIZATION OF MOOD IN
CARINTHIA BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 14, IN WAKE OF VARIOUS
PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS UNDERWAY IN AUSTRIA AND YUGOSLAVIA,
COULD LEAD TO MAJOR ACTS OF VIOLENCE, INCLUDING BOMBINGS
AND ASSISSINATIONS. APPROPRIATE SECURITY MEASURES
REPORTEDLY ARE BEING TAKEN AS ALL SIDES TO ISSUE ATTEMPT
TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE APPROACHES TO NOV. 14
LANGUAGE CENSUS.BUCHANAN

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